

Remarks

The Office Action of January 8, 2008 has been carefully considered. In that action, Claims 1-7, 11, 12, 25 and 30 were rejected. In response, the Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 and added dependent Claims 41-43. Claims 8-10, 13-24, 26-29 and 31-33; 34-38; 39; and 40 were previously withdrawn in response to an earlier restriction requirement. As such, Claims 1-7, 11-12, 25, 30 and 41-43 are pending with none of the Claims currently being allowed.

35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-7, 11 and 25 were rejected as being anticipated by Hill *et al.* The Examiner notes that the previous amendments are not persuasive because the z-yarn is not excluded from traveling in other directions, and that the z-yarns “switch directions to cross over or cross under the x- and y- yarns.” In response, independent Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly articulate that the first and second directions are substantially perpendicular, and that the third direction is substantially perpendicular to the first plane and second plane. Applicant believes this amendment clearly overcomes Hill *et al* because 1) the x- and y- yarns of Hill *et al* are not substantially perpendicular; and 2) the z-yarn of Hill *et al* is not substantially perpendicular to the first and second planes because it switches directions throughout the weave pattern.

Claims 1-7, 11 and 25 were rejected as being anticipated by Ebbesen *et al.* For the reasons set forth above with respect to Hill *et al.*, the Claims are believed to be patentably distinct from this reference.

Applicant submits that no new matter has been introduced in amended Claim 1 because the originally filed Figures clearly showed the orientation of the 3-D fabric preform as claimed.

In light of the patentability of independent Claim 1, dependent Claims 2-7, 11, 25 and 41-43 depending therefrom are likewise believed patentable.

35 U.S.C. §103

The Office rejected dependent Claims 12 and 30 as being unpatentable over of the combination of Hill *et al.* and Jayaraman. This rejection is deemed moot in light of the amendment to Claim 1 that clearly distinguishes the present invention over Hill *et al.*, and the fact that Jayaraman does not provide this structure.

New Claims

Dependent claims 41-43 have been added to further define the invention. Applicant submits that these Claims do not introduce new matter. Specifically, with respect to Claim 41, the outermost surface and interior portion thereunder are inherent to the preform, and third fibers bending around said outermost surface is disclosed in the originally filed Figures. With respect to Claim 42, the originally filed Figures show the substantially linear orientation of third fibers in the interior portion of the preform, insofar as they do not switch directions like the prior art. Finally, Claim 43 merely points out that first fibers are only first fibers, second are only second, and third only third, insofar as they don't "change identities" in the preform. This is also clear in the originally filed Figures.

For at least the reasons given above, the Applicants believe that this Amendment places the case in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested. If, however, any issue remains unresolved, a telephone call to expedite allowance and issue is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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